

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1 1. A method for directory assistance in response to a call from
2 a caller, the method comprising:
3 receiving the call;
4 determining if the call is a request for directory assistance and, if not,
5 routing the call as dialed;
6 if the call is a request for directory assistance, routing the call to a
7 speech recognizer;
8 determining the type of directory assistance requested;
9 if the caller is not requesting business directory assistance, routing
10 the call to a call center;
11 if the caller is requesting business directory assistance, automatically
12 determining at least one telephone number satisfying the caller request.

1 2. A method for directory assistance as in claim 1 wherein the
2 caller requests business information by business name.

1 3. A method for directory assistance as in claim 1 wherein the
2 caller requests business information by business category.

1 4. A method for directory assistance as in claim 1 wherein
2 determining at least one telephone number is based on the location of the caller.

1 5. A method for directory assistance as in claim 1 further
2 comprising:
3 querying the caller for automatic connection; and
4 if the caller requests automatic connection, routing the call to a
5 selected connection number.

1 6. A method for directory assistance as in claim 1 further
2 comprising:

3 determining that the caller is having problems automatically obtaining
4 business directory assistance; and
5 routing the call to a call center.

1 7. A method for directory assistance as in claim 6 further
2 comprising supplying the call center with information about caller activity.

1 8. A method for directory assistance as in claim 1 wherein
2 determining if the call is a request for directory assistance is based on a dialing
3 pattern entered by the caller.

1 9. A method for directory assistance wherein a call for directory
2 assistance is routed to a speech recognizer to determine the type of assistance
3 requested and, if the request is for business information, automatically retrieving
4 requested business directory assistance information, otherwise routing the call to a
5 call center.

1 10. A system for directory assistance comprising:
2 at least one switch for routing incoming calls, the switch determining
3 if an incoming call is a request for directory assistance;
4 a database holding business directory information;
5 at least one call center; and
6 a speech recognizer in communication with the at least one switch,
7 the database and the at least one call center, the speech recognizer determining if the
8 request for directory assistance is for business information and, if so, accessing the
9 database to satisfy the request, otherwise routing the call to the call center.

1 11. A system for directory assistance as in claim 10 wherein the
2 speech recognizer satisfies the request based on receiving a business name.

1 12. A system for directory assistance as in claim 10 wherein the
2 speech recognizer satisfies the request based on receiving a business category.

1 13. A system for directory assistance as in claim 10 wherein the
2 speech recognizer satisfies the request based on location of a caller placing the
3 request.

1 14. A system for directory assistance as in claim 10 wherein the
2 speech recognizer queries a caller placing the request to connect to a number
3 satisfying the request.

1 15. A system for directory assistance as in claim 10 wherein the
2 speech recognizer routes a caller placing the request to a call center if the caller is
3 experiencing a problem.

1 16. A system for directory assistance as in claim 15 wherein the
2 speech recognizer sends information about caller activity to the call center.

1 17. A system for directory assistance as in claim 10 wherein
2 determining if an incoming call is a request for directory assistance is based on a
3 dialing pattern entered by a caller.

1 18. A speech recognizer for use in servicing a call requesting
2 directory assistance, the speech recognizer providing at least one number in
3 response to a request for business directory assistance and routing the call to a call
4 center otherwise.